

HISTORY

When Helena began operating in Helena, Arkansas, in 1957, the company was a formulator/distributor serving regional markets.

Helena took orders during the day and formulated, packaged, and delivered the products the next day. However, depending on the delivery schedule, trucks were often sent out that night to catch the ferry across the Mississippi River or to begin the long drive to the Missouri Bootheel.



The business model worked and Helena expanded in the Mid-South, then into the Southwest, Southeast, Florida, and the San Joaquin Valley of California. Each regional area included formulation facilities that provided products for the growing sales force.

As the company prospered, larger, highly capitalized companies bought into Helena. In 1962, Diamond Shamrock purchased 50% of Helena. In 1979, an affiliate of Bayer bought Diamond Shamrock's interest.

In 1975, Helena moved its headquarters to Memphis. In 1977, Bayer assumed management control. Ten years later, in 1987, Bayer sold Helena to Marubeni America. Today, Helena is owned jointly by Marubeni America Corp. and Marubeni Corp. of Tokyo, Japan.

The history of Helena mirrors the dramatic evolution of U. S. agriculture since 1957. Farm mechanization was replacing human labor, and local formulation of pesticide products was being displaced by "package" goods that were developed and sold by basic manufacturers and distributed by Helena and other companies.

Helena was on the leading edge of this trend and accelerated its expansion. In the late 1980's, it began acquiring companies and opening wholesale locations in the Midwest and other northern regions, including the Great Lake states and the Pacific Northwest. Fertilizer products and related services were also becoming a staple of Helena's offerings, along with pesticides, seed, and a growing, diverse line of proprietary products that the company developed under Helena Products Group.

Helena's Specialty Division also expanded its market presence in turf & ornamental, forestry, aquatics and vegetation management markets with similar product mixes and chemistries that are used in agriculture. The Specialty sales force now operates across the country in key markets in these unique and growing industries.

The company has also diversified into service areas such as lending, variable rate technologies, and tissue analysis to fine-tune product application techniques and increase productivity.

Today, Helena does business in all 48 contiguous states in the U. S. and has a growing international presence. Expansion within the U.S. is continuing as business conditions dictate.


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